

Mountain Memories

A Book of Remembrance

1848-1986

Kamas Utah Stake of Zion

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WILLIAM WALLACE CLUFF

Stake President 1865-1901

William Wallace Cluff, born 8 March 1832 in Willoughby Lake, Ohio, was the fourth son of David Cluff and Elizabeth Hall. David Cluff was born in 1795 and served in the War of 1812. While traveling through New York on a canal boat in 1830, David Cluff met Martin Harris. Elder Harris spoke with David Cluff at great length concerning the restoration of the Gospel and sold to him one of the first editions of the Book of Mormon. David Cluff settled his family at Willoughby Lake which was three miles from Kirtland Ohio. During the summer of 1831, David traveled to Kirtland to learn more about the Mormons who had recently gathered there with their prophet. He was baptized that fall.

The Cluff family moved to Kirtland in 1836. David, who was a skilled ship builder before beginning his pioneer adventuring in the "far west," was also a skilled carpenter. He was among those who helped build the Kirtland Temple. He also was among the first who received their endowments in the newly dedicated temple. In 1838, following a mission to Canada and the Eastern States the year previous, David Cluff and his family departed from Kirtland to go to Jackson County, Missouri. Members of the family became ill at Springfield, Illinois and were prevented from continuing their journey. The result was that the Cluff family escaped being driven from Missouri by the mobs.

The Cluff family traveled to Commerce, Illinois in 1840 and, living in tents, joined with the other first settlers to build the city of Nauvoo. Once again Brother David Cluff's carpentry skills were in demand as he was employed in building the Nauvoo Temple.

William^{Wallace} Cluff was baptized by Elder Peter Shurtz in the Mississippi River in 1842. He had a special gift of faith as a child and was given many responsibilities because he listened to the promptings of the Spirit. Growing up in Kirtland and Nauvoo, William had many opportunities to hear the Prophet Joseph speak and to observe the sacrifices of the Saints as they labored to complete the temple before being forced to leave Nauvoo. His love and admiration for the Prophet Joseph is easily recognized from these words in his private journal:

I thought the Prophet Joseph Smith was the grandest man I had ever seen. He appeared to my youthful imagination to be superhuman, which impression has been retained in my mind ever since.

I shall never forget the excitement which prevailed among the people of Nauvoo when the news of the martyrdom reached the city, especially on the following day when the bodies were brought home. No pen or tongue of man will ever be able to describe those terrible times. I well remember going into the Mansion House where their bodies lay. Prophet and Patriarch of God (sic) gave me an anguish that filled my youthful soul with a horror that can never be erased from my memory while life shall last.

When he was thirteen years old, William ^{Wallace Cluff} observed two boys stealing grain from his father's granary and reported the incident to the boys' father. The father turned on William and began beating him unmercifully with a buggy whip. William crawled home with flesh and blood matted into his shirt. He refused to tell his father who had beat him for fear that his father might, in justifiable anger, go after the man and kill him. But he vowed that some day that man would pay for the beating.

Many years later, as presiding bishop, William ^{Wallace Cluff} was conducting tithing settlement when the man walked through the door of the old log church in Coalville. Visibly shaken, Bishop Cluff rose and started towards the man to settle the life-long grudge and take his revenge. Then the words came to him, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." (Matt 5:44)

William struggled with his feelings, thinking of the scars he carried, the hurt he still felt, and the vow of revenge he had carried for years. Still the words were in his ears. He knew he could crush the old man easily. Finally, however, he turned and sat down. Those around him thought he had suddenly gotten sick. He told them he was all right; that a lifetime thorn in his soul had been removed. Bishop Cluff forgave the old man and later helped him through some difficulties.

The Cluff family left Nauvoo in 1846, spending two years at Mount Pisgah and two years at Council Bluffs, Iowa, enduring many hardships before beginning their journey to Salt Lake in May 1850. They arrived in Salt Lake on 3 October 1850, and following General Conference settled in Provo. In the summer of 1853 when the Walker War broke out, William enlisted as a cavalryman and rode into the hills in pursuit of the Indian warriors who had been driving off stock and murdering settlers found outside the stockade.

Brother William Cluff was called to go on a mission to the Sandwich Islands in April 1854. He sold twenty acres, half in wheat, for less than \$15. He and his companion, Joseph F. Smith, shared a suit of clothes and so took turns going to church. He labored in the Islands for four years during which time he learned the Hawaiian language and enjoyed success in baptizing many converts.

Upon returning from the Sandwich Islands, the elders found it necessary to find employment in California to obtain sufficient funds to continue their journey. He and several others found jobs at the saw mills in the redwood forests. Eli Whipple, owner of several of the saw mills, was also a Mormon. Eli Whipple gathered a company together in March 1858 to travel to Utah; William Cluff joined that company. The Whipple family included a young woman, Anne. Williams's journal records:

I must admit that a feeling of more than ordinary gallantry prompted me in my attentions and efforts to please her. That feeling and a special interest continued to grow as my homeward journey approached to an end.

William and Anne made plans to be married. Soon after their arrival in Salt Lake, he was called to serve a mission in Denmark. The wedding was postponed. Elder Cluff returned from Denmark in May 1863 and was immediately given the task of going east and supervising the emigration of six hundred Scandinavian and three hundred English and Scotch Saints.

The Whipple family had moved to St. George, Utah while Elder Cluff was in Denmark. William traveled to St. George after the October Conference and found that Anne had not changed in her affections towards him. She became his bride on 24 October 1863. Shortly after the marriage, Elder Cluff was called to serve a second mission in the Sandwich Islands. Ann and William's first child was born while he was in Hawaii. They became the parents of eight children: William Wallace, Jr., Anna May, Erastus Eli, Albion Whipple, Edward, Claire Lillian, Flora Marion, and Joseph F. Only four lived to maturity.

In March 1864, Apostles Ezra T. Benson and Lorenzo Snow, Alma L. Smith, and William Cluff were together in a small boat attempting to land at Lahaina in the Hawaiian Islands. The boat capsized in the rough surf. Elder Cluff was able to swim so jumped from the boat, thereby escaping injury. The others were thrown from the boat. All surfaced unhurt except the captain and Elder Snow. Finally Elder Snow's body was found; it was stiff and lifeless. Brother Cluff writes:

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Brother Alma L. Smith and myself were sitting side by side. We laid Brother Snow across our laps, and, on the way to shore, we quietly administered to him and asked the Lord to spare his life, that he might return to his family and home.

On reaching the shore, we carried him a little way, to some empty barrels that were lying on the sandy beach. We laid him face downwards on one of these, and rolled him back and forth until we succeeded in getting the water that he had swallowed out of him.

During this time, a number of persons came down from the town; among them was Mr. E. P. Adams, a merchant. All were willing to do what they could. We washed Brother Snow's face with camphor, furnished by Mr. Adams. We did not only what was customary in such cases, but also what the spirit seemed to whisper to us.

After working over him for some time, without any indications of returning life, the bystanders said that nothing more could be done for him. But we did not feel like giving him up, and still prayed and worked over him with an assurance that the Lord would hear and answer our prayers.

Finally we were impressed to place our mouth over his and make an effort to inflate his lungs, alternately blowing in and drawing out the air, imitating as far as possible, the natural process of breathing. This we persevered in until we succeeded in inflating his lungs. After a little, there were very faint indications of returning vitality. A slight wink of the eye, which, until then, had been open and deathlike, and a very faint rattle in the throat, were the first symptoms of returning life. These grew more and more distinct, until consciousness was fully restored. When this result was reached, it must have been fully an hour after the capsizing of the boat.

William ^{Wallace} Cluff was called by the First Presidency of the Church as presiding bishop over the growing settlements of the Morgan, Summit, and Wasatch counties in February 1865. Bishop Cluff moved his family to Coalville as it was centrally located and set about diligently performing his duties. The Black Hawk War broke out in 1865, and Bishop Cluff was commissioned as a colonel of the Summit County Militia. He was responsible for directing the gathering of the local saints into the fort at Coalville. Wasatch County was withdrawn from Bishop Cluff's jurisdiction and organized with its own bishopric. Bishop Cluff served as president of the Scandinavian Mission from 1869 to 1871.

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William Wallace Cluff

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William W. Cluff was sustained as the first stake president when Summit Stake was created in 1877; he served as such for twenty-four years. He was again called to preside over the Scandinavian Mission in May 1876 and was in Copenhagen within a few weeks. After three and a half years he returned home. He served two more missions to Hawaii; in 1887 and then in 1900. President Cluff continued as stake president even while serving in the mission field.

President Cluff was twice elected as a delegate to territorial constitutional conventions and served six terms as a member of the territorial legislature. He was president of the Coalville Co-operative Mercantile Institution for thirty-three years, and was the first mayor of Coalville. President Cluff died on 21 August 1915 and was buried in Salt Lake City.

GEORGE G. SNYDER

George G. Snyder served as a counselor to President W. W. Cluff from 1877 to 1879. George Gideon Snyder was born on 11 June 1819, at Palmyra, Jefferson County, New York, to Lovisa Comstock and Isaac Snyder. He spent his youth in New York and Canada. His parents and other family members accepted the gospel in 1838. George was baptized on 7 July 1839 by Robert Snyder. The Snyder family joined a company emigrating to Nauvoo, Illinois when George was nineteen years old. His brothers, Samuel and Chester, and his sisters, Sarah and Jane, were also in the company. George received his patriarchal blessing on 5 March 1842 in Nauvoo from Patriarch Hyrum Smith. The Snyder family remained in Nauvoo for two years before moving on to Saint Joseph, Missouri, then a small frontier town.

George G. Snyder married Sarah W. Hatch on 17 April 1840 at Job Creek, Illinois. They lived there until the fall of 1849 when they, with their two children, came to Utah. They made their home in the Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward. George and Sarah joined in the gold rush in the spring of 1850 and went to California. They returned to Utah in 1854 and again settled in Salt Lake. George embraced the doctrine of polygamy, marrying Elsie Jacobs in 1855 and Caroline Kilfoyle the following year. About this time his first wife, Sarah, died. On 19 July 1857 he married Martha Kilfoyle.

George Snyder was called to serve a two-year mission to England in 1858. He returned from England and settled in Wanship, Summit County, Utah, in March 1864 where he was bishop for many years. He also built the first grist mill in that part of the county. From 1864 until 1879, he was a central figure in all political, ecclesiastical, and business affairs of the county. He was appointed a probate judge in 1865 by Governor Doty and was elected for two more terms. In addition to raising stock and ranching, he, being a great lover of horses, bred and owned some of the finest horses in the state.